



Testimony of
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Judiciary Committee Hearing
February 29, 2016

***HB 5402 AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXTENSION OF WHISTLE-BLOWER
PROTECTIONS TO AN EMPLOYEE WHO REPORTS A SUSPECTED VIOLATION
OF LAW TO THE EMPLOYEE'S SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER.***

Good afternoon Senators and Representatives. My name is Shellye Davis and I have been a paraprofessional in the Hartford public schools for over 25 years. I am also the Jurisdictional Vice President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of more than 90 local unions representing nearly 30,000 public and private sector employees. Our members include more than 15,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, school nurses and other school personnel across the state.

I am here before you to support **HB 5402, AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXTENSION OF WHISTLE-BLOWER PROTECTIONS TO AN EMPLOYEE WHO REPORTS A SUSPECTED VIOLATION OF LAW TO THE EMPLOYEE'S SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER.**

The proposed legislation would protect from discharge or other discipline employees who bring to the attention of their managers or supervisors at work violations or suspected violations of state or federal laws, and, in the case of municipal employees, additionally protect them from discharge or discipline where they report to a public body any unethical practices or mismanagement or abuse of authority by their employer.

Why is this legislation needed? In most cases, an employee is not going to go beyond his immediate supervisor or manager to report a violation of the law. Most employees would not know, for instance, whether to contact OSHA or the municipal fire department or some other agency when they find a safety problem. They report it to their manager and any adverse job action is going to be taken long before it occurs to them to bypass the company or city management and go to an independent agency.

These employees act in good faith. Their jobs should not be at risk because of a technicality in the law that says they have to report violations of law to some municipal or state or federal agency. They should not be obliged to have to determine what agency to report it to. They should be protected if they go to their manager in good faith to fix problems.

Please support HB 5402. It is, in effect, a job security bill.

Thank you for your time.